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April 2017

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### The State of Retail

As I write this President's letter it is raining in San Francisco, and I am watching a mentally ill homeless woman yell incoherently and throw garbage onto the recently swept sidewalk. The good news is that the Governor has declared the drought over in California. The bad news is that we still have a visible homeless problem. As the woman checks her reflection in the door of the recently closed BCBG store, I turn my focus to the state of retail in Union Square.



Union Square is fortunate to have some of the best shopping on the planet, from luxury to value, and at all price points in between, in a very authentic and walkable area. However, as I learned at the recent CDA/IDA West Coast Urban District Forum in Long Beach, a variety of factors are negatively impacting our collective retail sales, and vacancy rates are inching upward. We are below a 10% vacancy rate, which is under the danger zone, so we are lucky for now. But what is causing this downward trend?



We know consumer behavior is changing with increasing options on where and how to shop. Consumers can easily browse online in the comfort of their home thus avoiding the hassle of traffic, expensive parking, street construction, and panhandlers. We understand Millennials, who have a considerable impact on our retail economy, want to buy goods and services from authentic, trustworthy companies. They expect products to be made under fair labor practices with genuine materials. They are looking for hip, local shops that offer unique, personalized, and Instagrammable experiences.

As downtown champions, what is our role in ensuring that our retail centers stay vibrant? At the Union Square BID, we recently called in experts (retail brokers and consultants) to talk about recent retail trends, and how to be responsive. Larger stores are being divided in two or subleased with a demand for smaller retail spaces, and conditional use permits are being submitted to convert third floor retail space into other uses. The experts tell us that in Union Square, flexible spaces, such as pop-up stores where a retail concept can be tested, do quite well.

Shopping must be a fun, positive, and satisfying

Have a news story or a project you'd like to highlight in the CDA *District Digest*?

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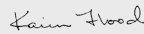
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experience to be successful. Having the right products and services, providing excellent customer service, and ensuring a satisfying ambiance, from lighting and music to overall presentation are essential components. We as place managers need to ensure the experience on the outside matches that of the store's interior. Our sidewalks must be clean, safe, and pleasant. Parking garages must be well lit and wayfinding systems intuitive for all visitors.

As we continue this conversation about the current state of retail and vibrancy of our respective downtowns, I welcome you to e-mail me with your comments. In the meantime, keep up the excellent work!

Warm regards,



**Karin Flood**  
Executive Director  
Union Square BID  
[karin@unionsquarebid.com](mailto:karin@unionsquarebid.com)

## CDA POLICY CORNER

### Urban Revitalization

It's an exciting time to be engaged in urban revitalization issues in California. Every legislator I talk to who represents an urban center asks me the question: "How can you help us continue to revitalize my city?" Which is always followed-up by more detailed questions about housing, transportation, mixed used development and mental health.

What is particularly unique about CDA and why we are receiving greater interest in the Capitol is because of a few critical factors:

- CDA is the only organized business voice in the Capitol that is solely focused on urban-centric issues.
- We have a true statewide presence given our members are represented in virtually every legislative district in the state.
- The organization can establish a policy narrative and personal relationship and our reach can be extremely effective with lawmakers.
- We do business in districts that matter - our voice can reach to legislative leadership and key chairs of committees.

CDA is also benefited from a focused advocacy strategy that is true to our mission of supporting urban-centric economic development issues. We can, and should, stay extremely disciplined on core issues that impact downtowns. This is who we are and this is how we will develop and grow our identity and strength in the Capitol.

**Jason Bryant**  
Bryant Government Affairs  
April 2017 Legislative Update

## CDA MENTIONS

### Putting People First: Rethinking Downtown Development

*Long Beach Business Journal*

As technology advances and life expectations evolve,

many argue that society, specifically major cities...

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### Millennials Shaping Cities - And the Zeitgeist

*Long Beach Business Journal*

At the Psychic Temple - a rehabbed historic building that is now home to advertising firm interTrend Communications - individuals from throughout the West...

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## IN THE NEWS

### Retail Turmoil means Stores must Innovate Faster

*The San Francisco Chronicle*

Since the relaunch of its website six years ago, Target has furiously pushed itself to become a retailer...

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### A Visual Tool for Guiding Urban Change

*Governing*

Photo-powered "urban diaries" can give residents a powerful new way to contribute to the dialogue that...

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### Next Stop for Getta Clue and its Streetwear: Downtown Commons

*The Sacramento Bee*

Downtown Association  
San Pedro Historic  
Waterfront BID  
South Park BID  
Telegraph Property &  
Business Mgmt. Corp.  
The Downtown Burbank  
Partnership  
The Placemaking Group  
The River District  
Tracy City Center  
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Tulare Downtown  
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Program  
Union Square BID  
Urban Place Consulting  
Group, Inc.  
Vista Village Business  
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Walnut Creek Downtown  
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*The Sacramento Bee*

Getta Clue just got a new address. The locally owned clothing store, regarded for keeping Sacramento...

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#### Historic Preservation can Revitalize Downtown San Diego

*The San Diego Union-Tribune*

The C Street corridor needs exciting architecture and new development, and Save our Heritage... [READ MORE>>](#)

#### How the Dodger Baseball Stadium Shaped LA - and Revealed its Divisions

*The Guardian*

On 10 April 1962, amid ceremony and celebration, Dodger Stadium, major league baseball's modern...

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#### Confronting the New Urban Crisis

*City Lab*

In this excerpt from his new book, Richard Florida explains how "winner-take-all urbanism" has deepened inequality, segregation, and poverty-and what cities...

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#### California Today: Reasons to Love Fresno

*The New York Times*

Complaining about the cost of living is a favorite pastime in California. [READ MORE>>](#)

#### California Prioritizing Repair, Transit Investments, and Walking & Biking with New Gas Tax Increase

*T4America Blog*

California could be the next state to raise new revenues to invest in transportation, and unlike most... [READ MORE>>](#)

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Do you have your ear to the ground when it comes to the latest downtown news in your region? To submit news to be considered for inclusion in the newsletter, please contact Allison Shashok at [allison@downtown.org](mailto:allison@downtown.org).

### CDA District Digest

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